

February 2005

The Reno Mini-Convention was a huge success by any definition, especially when you consider we were participants in the 'storm of the century' there. The hard work and planning of the NORPAC board deserves a well-earned tip-of-the-helmet. Bernice, Mike, Jay, Gary and all, please take a bow. Many great seminars from the national staff, town halls, and the silent auction, not to mention the steward-financed NW region hosted party, made the weekend fly by.

Big THANKS also go out to Steve Johnson (fresh off the Heartland Park press conference), Mike Dickerson, Barb Lundquist, Howard "the Good" Duncan, Garrett Mudd and Ms. Terry Ozment for bringing the national staff to Reno and completing the information transfer firsthand.

Unfortunately, JB Niday could not fly in to present the Rally America program. But the circuit rally program, along with the move of Rally Cross to the Solo department, bode well for the future of this discipline.

Gary Pitts and I awarded, for the first time, the NORPAC regional achievement award. Reno Region won the award for their hard work in making Reno a user-friendly SCCA home away from home, not to mention the many national honors they have garnered in the past year. With a track nearly ready to join our little family, expect big things from the Reno Region. Dave & Carol Deborde, please accept this well deserved tip-of-the-helmet.

As you may have heard by now, the Board of Directors voted to move the Run-Offs to Heartland Park starting in 2006. I was initially in favor of maintaining the status quo in Mid-Ohio, but after a long and hard discussion, I changed my mind. The Board sees this as a step up, and an improvement of our event.

This year with over seven hundred cars, the paddock at Mid-Ohio was stretched to the limit. With Spec Miata coming onboard as a National group in 2006 and the possible split of CenDiv in the works, we could potentially see one thousand entries in the near future. To have sufficient paddock space to have all racers on level paved surface was one big factor in favor of Heartland Park. Not to mention that this move may result in a significant increase in revenue for the SCCA.

Track manager Ray Irwin is a longtime member of SCCA and a real partner in this production. In the next eighteen months he will repave all two and a half miles of the track, build a new tower, medical, and tech buildings, not to mention garages. The Board of Directors has full confidence that Ray will accomplish his plans, with five million dollars contributed toward the effort by the City of Topeka. This will be the first time in our history that a track is being tailored for the Run-Offs. I will be in Topeka in May, August and for the World Challenge round to check on the improvements. Stay tuned for the progress reports.

Do NOT be surprised if the Solo Nationals to move to the paddock at Heartland Park in 2006. After attending my first Solo Nationals last September, I believe the entire city of Topeka will mobilize behind the Run-Offs to take it to the next level of friendliness and hospitality.

Before I go this month a huge tip-of-the-helmet goes out to Glen Wilhelm for his service as outgoing NORPAC executive steward. Having worked under Gary Meeker for over ten years I look forward to having him take NORPAC to the next level under his executive stewardship.